

1 CLAIMS

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3 1. A method comprising:
4 Sub A1 } receiving information about a prospective user of an operating system; and
5 developing an operating system image, pre-populated with the information,
6 to be installed on a computer.

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8 2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information comprises
9 data describing the identity of the prospective user.

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11 3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information comprises
12 one or more of the user's name, initials, street address, state of residence, country
13 of citizenship, electronic mail (email) address, age, social security number, date of
14 birth, profession, hobbies, interests, and computer expertise.

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16 4. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information comprises
17 data describing hardware preferences of the prospective user.

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19 5. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the receiving comprises
20 receiving the information in response to one or more requests for information
21 targeted at a consumer.

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23 6. A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the consumer is the
24 prospective user.
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1 7. A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the requests are presented to
2 the consumer when a computer with the operating system is ordered by the
3 consumer.

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5 8. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the receiving comprises
6 obtaining the information from a computer used by a consumer to order a new
7 computer with the operating system.

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9 9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the consumer is the
10 prospective user.

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12 10. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the obtaining comprises
13 accessing a bill of materials corresponding to the computer.

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15 11. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising storing the
16 information in a bill of materials.

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18 12. A method as recited in claim 11, further comprising making the bill
19 of materials available to other application programs.
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1 13. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the receiving comprises
2 receiving information about a plurality of prospective users of the operating
3 system, and wherein the developing comprises developing an operating system
4 image, pre-populated with the information for each of the plurality of prospective
5 users, to be installed on the computer.

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7 14. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the operating system is
8 organized as a plurality of components, and wherein one of the plurality of
9 components is an identity component that includes the information.

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11 15. A method as recited in claim 14, wherein the identity component is
12 accessible to other application programs to allow the other application programs to
13 be customized based at least in part on the information.

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15 16. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
16 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
17 1.

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19 17. A method comprising:
20 receiving information regarding an intended user of a computer; and
21 automatically customizing an operating system installed on a computer
22 based at least in part on the received information.

1 18. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the automatically
2 customizing comprises automatically customizing the operating system prior to
3 distribution of the computer to the user.

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5 19. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the automatically
6 customizing comprises automatically customizing the operating system during an
7 initial boot of the computer.

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9 20. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the information comprises
10 data describing the identity of the prospective user.

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12 21. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the information comprises
13 data describing hardware preferences of the prospective user.

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15 22. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the automatically
16 customizing comprises determining, based at least in part on the received
17 information, what functionality of the operating system to install on the computer.

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19 23. A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the operating system is
20 organized as a plurality of components, and wherein one of the plurality of
21 components is an identity component that includes the information.

1 24. A method as recited in claim 23, wherein the automatically
2 customizing comprises determining, based at least in part on the received
3 information, which of the plurality of components to install on the computer.

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5 25. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
6 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
7 17.

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9 26. A method comprising:
10 Sub A5 accessing a record of user information describing a user, the record being
11 available to a plurality of programs; and
12 Sub B1 customizing one of the plurality of programs based at least in part on the
13 user information.

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15 27. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the program comprises an
16 operating system.

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18 28. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the program comprises an
19 application program.

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21 29. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the customizing of the one
22 program is performed by the one program.

1 30. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the accessing comprises
2 communicating information requests to an interface that supports one or more of
3 reading data from the record, writing data to the record, and modifying data in the
4 record.

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6 31. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the accessing comprises
7 accessing the record from a local source.

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9 32. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the accessing comprises
10 accessing the record from a remote source.

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12 33. One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer
13 program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim
14 26.

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16 34. One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a
17 computer program that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer,
18 causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

19 accessing a record of user information describing a user; and

20 automatically customizing an operating system installed on the computer
21 based on the user information.

1 41. A system comprising:
2 a plurality of programs;
3 a record of user information describing a user; and
4 an interface communicatively coupled to at least one of the plurality of
5 programs and the record of user information, wherein the interface is configured to
6 receive information requests from the at least one program and obtain the
7 requested information from the record of user information.

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9 42. A system as recited in claim 41, wherein the interface is further
10 configured to receive information storage requests from the at least one program
11 and store the requested information in the record of user information.

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13 43. A system as recited in claim 41, wherein the user information
14 comprises data describing the identity of the user.

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16 44. A system as recited in claim 41, wherein the information comprises
17 data describing hardware preferences of the user.

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19 45. A system as recited in claim 41, wherein the record of user
20 information is stored locally with the plurality of programs.

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22 46. A system as recited in claim 41, wherein the record of user
23 information is stored remotely from the plurality of programs.

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